

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Mary is blessed among women. She, of all women of all time, was the chosen vessel that bore God as He took on Flesh. By virtue of the Annunciation, it was her flesh that He took on. She conceived by the ear, through inspired angelic preaching of the Word of Promise, and she bore a Son.

She is rightly called *Θεοτόκος*, God-bearer. Immanuel, God with us, was first God with her. As the Ark of the Covenant was the bearer of the Holy Things of God, as the very Presence of God was physically above the Ark, so did Mary bear the God who made the Ark Holy, the God that was physically present in her.

Faith knows its object, even prenatal faith. Elizabeth, the cousin of Mary, although barren, was already in her sixth month of pregnancy when Mary conceived God's Son by the Holy Spirit. John the Baptizer, still in the waters of the womb of his mother, nonetheless leapt for joy at the presence of His Lord, Mary's Son, still in the ark of His mother's womb.

Faith comes through hearing, and when sound of Mary's voice pierced Elizabeth's ear, her son confessed His faith in the Christ kinetically. And Elizabeth was filled with Holy Spirit.

The blessing that Elizabeth spoke by the Spirit of God was "Blessed is she who believed..." So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. And blessed indeed is she who believed. For the Seed of that woman was the Promised

Christ, the Seed of Abraham, whose day Abraham saw and was glad.

There is great hope in all this for you, O man. For you who were born, not in like manner to the Christ, but rather in sin, rather conceived of sinners, for your birth is only the gateway to death. For those conceived and born in sin can but sin, and so merit God's wrath.

But One was born without sin, born of the Virgin by the Spirit of God, conceived in holiness. Therein lies your hope. There is another birth, a second birth, a birth of Water and the Spirit, by which His sinlessness is made yours. In that birth, that birth from above by the Spirit, that washing of regeneration, your sins are forgiven. And what was true of the Virgin's Son is declared to be true of you – you are declared holy in God's sight because of Christ.

So you are among the generations that call Mary blessed, for you have been blessed by the Son she bore. He has blessed you with life, by the working of His Spirit. You who were lowly are exalted by faith in Him. His mercy is on you who fear Him, from generation to generation. And He fills you who are hungry with good things: His Body and Blood, given and shed for you.

Blessed is the Fruit of the Virgin's womb, for He died and rose for you. So you, in faith, may confess with Mary: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and My spirit rejoices in God my Savior..."